

The Virgin Islands Consortium

David Hall On UVI's Med School Gift: "The \$30 Million Is A Full Outright Gift"

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Cynthia Graham **October 23, 2014**



In a wide-ranging interview with the *VI Consortium* on Wednesday regarding the construction of the University of the Virgin Islands' School of Medicine, UVI President Dr. David Hall said the \$30 million gift given to the University from Chicago-based New Generation Power, LLC on behalf of its Chairman, Dr. Chirinjeev Kathuria, is a "full outright gift" and that "the university does not have to put up anything" in order to receive the multi-million dollar donation.

Dr. Hall's comments came a week after the *VI Consortium* [published an article in which Senator Nereida "Nellie" Rivera-O'Reilly raised questions](#) about the viability of the gift, largely due to the University's lack of disclosure of the terms of the gift agreement.

In that interview, Sen. Rivera-O'Reilly revealed Dr. Hall had, during private discussions with the Senate about the medical school, made known the University would first have to secure a hefty loan amount that would then be co-signed by Dr. Kathuria in order for the project to get underway.

"What was clear is that UVI is borrowing \$10 million, and Kathuria is cosigning, and that the university may have to put up collateral to secure that \$10 million," Rivera-O'Reilly told the *VI Consortium*.

When asked if the senator's statements were correct, Dr. Hall called it "a misunderstanding."

"There is nothing about the University taking out a \$10 million loan," he said, "I think that comes out of a misunderstanding."

He continued: "What we indicated was that of the proceeds from the gift we want to [redacted] and use \$10 million to do the early-stage [redacted]."



UVI President Dr. David Hall says he "stands behind"

Dr. Kathuria's \$30 million gift.

"But the thing that [Sen. Rivera-O'Reilly] has pushed on," he added, "and that we have not been willing to reveal, and this is not because there is anything wrong, is the years, the terms [of the gift]."

Dr. Hall further pointed out that UVI "cannot share the content of anybody's gift."

"This is a gift between the University's Foundation and the donor," he said. "And for us to start revealing the details of any gift, puts us at a competitive disadvantage when we're trying to secure gifts from other donors. That is how universities operate."

Hall went on to say "there's not anything underhanded about that, it is because private donors and universities want the privilege of being able to have those types of arrangements secret and confidential. So, that is the part that we have not shared and I don't see any problem with that."

Hall would only disclose, in broad terms, that the gift is a legitimate one.

"The thing that I can say is definitive, is that this is an enforceable gift agreement; the donor, Dr. Kathuria, is bound by that gift agreement," he said.

Can UVI Forfeit the \$30 Million Gift?

According to Dr. Hall, the only factor that could cause Dr. Kathuria to withdraw his intent to fund the construction of what would be the first accredited medical school in the English-speaking Caribbean, is if UVI is not "successful in receiving preliminary accreditation," something Hall says he and his team are feverishly working to achieve by first submitting the required paperwork by the December 1 deadline.

"A major condition [of the gift] is on us receiving accreditation from the Liaison Committee of Medical Education," Hall explained. "[LCME] will make their preliminary ruling in February as to whether there will be a site visit, and the site visit will occur, sometime, we hope, in the early summer, and we will get a final decision [on preliminary accreditation] sometime toward the latter part of the summer."

Other than not receiving preliminary accreditation, Hall reiterated that the gift was "enforceable," adding that the donor had not "waffled or changed their mind."

"Dr. Kathuria and his company have both signed the gift and they stand behind it, and have not waffled or changed their mind about this in any way," he said. "So, I stand behind the gift; I stand behind Dr. Kathuria's integrity and his company's integrity."

In Part II, Dr. Hall goes in depth on why it made sense to construct the medical school's classrooms on St. Thomas and its simulation center on St. Croix, how the UVI board wrestled with its final decision to do so, where the university is with meeting the LCME December 1 deadline, why he trusts Dr. Kathuria and more.

Photo Credit: University of the Virgin Islands